



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PRICES DROP AT GOVERNMENT FUR-SEAL AUCTION

A decrease in prices of United States fur-seal skins marked the semiannual auction of Government-owned furs at St. Louis on April 12, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross L. Leffler announced today.

A total of 27,819 skins, products of the sealing industry administered by the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service on the Pribilof Islands, brought \$2,547,182. This compares with 26,890 skins sold for \$2,714,852 at the October 1956 sale. The grand average for all skins sold for the account of the United States Government was \$91.56; at the October sale it was \$100.96. The grand average at the April 1956 sale was \$93.27.

The sale was well attended by United States, Canadian, and European buyers.

Of the Alaska skins, 11,663 were dyed "Matara" (brown), 426 were "Safari" brown (a lighter brown), 10,154 were blacks and 5,576 "Kitovi" processed skins were offered for the first time. Kitovi has been characterized as "an exciting new shade of midnight gray with highlights of silver and an intriguing blue cast". It is the first new shade to be offered since Matara was introduced in 1939.

The Kitovi skins brought an average of \$119.38. Matara skins sold for an average of \$81.91, a decrease of 18.3 percent under the October auction. Safari skins brought an average of \$68.97, a decrease of 10.4 percent. The black skins averaged \$88.32, a downward change of 20.1 percent compared to the October sale price of \$109.38.

At the April sale, 117 dressed sea otter skins were sold for the account of the United States Government. These skins brought a total of \$2,677.

These sea otter pelts were accumulated as a result of salvage and other activities by the Fish and Wildlife Service on Amchitka Island, Alaska, in the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, over the past several years. Interested bidders were advised that the Government is not considering lifting the present prohibition against the taking of sea otters.

In addition to the United States skins, 3,453 South Africa fur-seal skins were sold for the account of the Government of the Union of South Africa at an average of \$36.35, a decrease of .6 percent from the last sale. Three hundred fifty Uruguay fur-seal skins were sold for the Government of Uruguay at an average of \$31.04. The October 1956 average was \$48.78.

The next auction is tentatively scheduled for October 18, 1957, in St. Louis.

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